

CHAPTER 4.Y.

APPLICATION OF ZONING

United States	Comment category: General Proposed amended text and Rationale: Recommend including “infection or infestation” throughout the chapter in addition to “disease” when identifying these hazards or potential hazards in an area for completeness, clarity and alignment with content in this chapter and use throughout the Code. Additions would most notably occur in the list of zoning purposes in Article 4.Y.1, in Article 4.Y.2, point 1 and throughout Article 4.Y.7 Supporting evidence: n/a
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Article 4.Y.1.

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this chapter is to provide recommendations to Member Countries on the application of zoning to establish and maintain distinct animal *subpopulations* with a specific *animal health status* within their territory. Zoning applies to *subpopulations* defined primarily on a geographical basis, separated by natural, artificial, or administrative boundaries and supported by appropriate *surveillance*, *biosecurity* and *sanitary measures*.

United States	Comment category: Change Proposed amended text: Zoning applies todesignates <i>subpopulations</i> defined primarily on a geographical basis, separated by natural, artificial, or administrative by natural or artificial geographic boundaries and, is supported by appropriate risk-based principles, <i>surveillance</i>, <i>biosecurity</i> and <i>sanitary measures</i>. Rationale: Recommend the following changes to the second sentence of Paragraph 1 under Purpose and scope: 1. deleting “applies to” and replacing with “designates” 2. deleting “defined primarily on a geographical basis, separated by natural, artificial, or administrative” and replacing with “by natural or artificial geographic “ 3. adding “risk-based principles” to the list of supportive practices
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	These edits provide better clarity to the explanation of zoning, align with recommended changes in Chapter 4.4 and highlight the importance of assessing risk factors for disease introduction and spread when establishing zones. Supporting evidence: n/a
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These recommendations should be applied in conjunction with the relevant disease-specific chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*.

While establishing and maintaining disease freedom throughout an entire territory of the country is the ultimate goal, zoning may provide a practical and effective approach when country freedom is difficult to achieve (by eradication) or maintain (by prevention). As a principle, when a *zone* is established in a country, the rest of the country automatically becomes another *zone*.

Member Countries may apply zoning for different purposes:

- to separate existing infected areas from free areas,

United States	Comment category: Addition Proposed amended text: to separate existing infected or infested areas from free areas Rationale: Recommend adding “or infested” for completeness and consistency with the similar recommendation to describe “disease, infection, or infestation” hazards throughout the chapter. Supporting evidence: n/a
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- to allow a progressive approach to achieve country or *zone* freedom from a specific disease,
- to control or eradicate a specific disease following one or more outbreaks within their previously free territory,
- to prevent the introduction and spread of disease, *infection* or *infestation* in response to heightened *risk*,
- to limit the impact of a potential disease incursion to a single *zone* by establishing multiple *free zones*,
- to establish or maintain safe domestic or *international trade*,
- other reasons as determined by the *Veterinary Authority*.

Article 4.Y.2.

Principles for defining and establishing a zone

The following principles apply when Member Countries define and establish a *zone*, and should be defined in *veterinary legislation*:

1. Geographical limits

The selection and extent of a *zone* should be dependent on the characteristics or situation of the disease, production system and territory in question and adapted to the prevailing or evolving epidemiological situation. Its boundaries should be defined either on the basis of administrative borders, predefined sizes of areas, such as a specified radius around *outbreaks*, or on the basis of the geographical information system (GIS), while taking into account natural or artificial barriers.

United States	Comment category: Addition Proposed amended text: ...or on the basis of the geographical information system (GIS) assessments, while taking into account natural or artificial barriers. Rationale: Recommend adding “assessments” to complete the description of the GIS outputs. GIS is a tool used to create a product, that is, the assessment. Supporting evidence: n/a
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The geographical limits of a *zone* should be clearly established by the *Veterinary Authority* and communicated through official channels.

2. Epidemiological separation

Animal *subpopulations* within the *zone* should be demonstrably separated from those in other *zones*. Measures used to establish and maintain this separation—including movement controls, spatial separation, *biosecurity*, *sanitary measures* and management of fomites, *vectors* and *wildlife*—should be appropriate to the epidemiology and the situation of the disease.

United States	Comment category: Additions Proposed amended text: Measures used to establish and maintain this separation based on risk-based principles—including but not limited to movement controls, spatial separation, <i>biosecurity</i>, <i>sanitary measures</i> and management of fomites, <i>vectors</i> and <i>wildlife</i>—should be appropriate to the epidemiology and the situation of the disease. Rationale: Recommend the following changes to the second sentence of Point 2, Epidemiological separation under 4.Y.2:
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	1. adding “based on risk-based principles” after “separation” to highlight the importance of assessing risk factors for disease introduction and spread when establishing zones 2. adding “but not limited to” after “including” to clarify that other measures can be used to establish and maintain separation beyond what has been noted Supporting evidence: n/a
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3. Biosecurity and sanitary measures

Biosecurity in accordance with Chapter 4.X., *sanitary measures* and other recommendations from disease-specific chapters appropriate to the *zone* should be applied to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of the disease, *infection* or *infestation* of concern.

4. Animal identification and traceability

Relevant *commodities* associated with the *zone* should be identifiable and their movements traceable. An effective animal identification and traceability system in accordance with Chapters 4.2. and 4.3. is a prerequisite for establishing and maintaining *zones*.

5. Surveillance

Surveillance should be tailored to the purpose of the *zone* and be conducted in accordance with Chapters 1.4, 1.5. and relevant disease-specific chapters.

United States	Comment category: Additions Proposed amended text: <i>Surveillance</i> should be tailored to the purpose of the <i>zone</i> and be conducted in accordance with Chapters 1.4, 1.5. and relevant disease-specific chapters, or other evidence-based measures. <i>Zones</i> may change from one type to another as the epidemiological situation and control objectives change, provided that the recommendations in this chapter and in the relevant disease-specific chapters, or other evidence-based measures are respected. Rationale: Recommend adding “or other evidence-based measures” to the <u>first</u> and <u>4th</u> sentences of Point 5, Surveillance under 4.Y.2. to reflect that evidence can emerge and change over time. Member Countries should be able to use up-to-date evidence when the Code has not yet had time to update relevant chapters.
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	Supporting evidence: n/a
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The *Veterinary Authority* should clearly outline the objectives of zoning and the control measures implemented in order to reach these objectives. Member Countries may establish various types of *zones* that may coexist within the same country or *zone*. *Zones* may change from one type to another as the epidemiological situation and control objectives change, provided that the recommendations in this chapter and in the relevant disease-specific chapters are respected. This chapter describes different types of *zones* that can be established by Member Countries. However, other types of *zones* may be established as necessary.

Where disease occurrence spans across borders or occurs near borders of countries, *Veterinary Authorities* are encouraged to coordinate and cooperate to implement appropriate measures on each side of the border.

Article 4.Y.3.

Roles and responsibilities

Defining, establishing and maintaining *zones* requires the coordinated actions of the *Veterinary Authority*, and relevant private-sector stakeholders. Roles and responsibilities include:

United States	Comment category: Addition Proposed amended text: Roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to: Rationale: Recommend adding “but are not limited to” after “include” to the second sentence of Paragraph 1 under Roles and responsibilities to clarify that the following list is not exhaustive. Supporting evidence: n/a
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1. Veterinary Authority

The *Veterinary Authority* has the final responsibility for defining, establishing, maintaining and adapting zones. Establishment of the *zone* includes:

- defining and officially communicating the boundaries of the *zone* and the measures to be applied in the *zone* including movement controls;
- implementing the supervision, inspection, and certification procedures required to establish and maintain the integrity of the *zone*;
- approving and overseeing *biosecurity* and contingency plans, *sanitary measures* and movement control procedures;

- ensuring the availability of sufficient human, financial, and technical resources to implement *surveillance*, diagnostics, and if relevant, *vaccination* or *vector* control;
- ensuring that *Veterinary Services* including *laboratories* operate in accordance with Chapters 3.2 and 3.4;
- verifying compliance with *zone* requirements by conducting and auditing *surveillance*, laboratory testing, reporting and certification;
- regularly coordinate and consult with stakeholders to monitor the effectiveness of zoning.
- maintaining documentation and records supporting the *animal health status* of the *zone*;
- collaborating with private operators for the definition of the *zone* and to ensure *biosecurity*, movement control, and reporting obligations are met.

2. Private stakeholders

The production sector, including farms, enterprises, and other relevant operators should participate in defining a *zone*, communicate relevant information and comply with *zone* requirements established by the *Veterinary Authority*.

Article 4.Y.4.

Free zone

A *free zone* may be established to reflect the *animal health status* of one or more *subpopulations* within the *zone*.

Depending on the prevailing or historical epidemiological situation, and except where historical freedom can be demonstrated in accordance with Article 1.4.6. point 2(b), the attainment or maintenance of freedom from a specific *infection* or *infestation* requires past or ongoing specific *surveillance* (and, if relevant, *vector surveillance*) conducted in accordance with Chapter 1.4. and the other relevant chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*.

The establishment and maintenance of a *free zone* requires appropriate *biosecurity* and *sanitary measures*, within the *zone* and at its boundaries.

So long as ongoing *surveillance* demonstrates the absence of the specific *infection* or *infestation*, and the other conditions for its definition and establishment continue to be met, and in accordance with the disease-specific chapter requirements, the *zone* maintains its freedom. This includes disease incursions where these are promptly and effectively managed by the setting up of *infected zone(s)* as described in Article 4.Y.6., except as otherwise stated in the disease-specific chapters.

Veterinary Authorities may establish *free zones* with the objective of preventing the introduction of pathogenic agents or limiting the occurrence of diseases or *infections* or *infestations* to specific areas within their territories and thus the consequences of such *outbreaks*. *Veterinary Authorities* should clearly define the boundaries of such *zones* taking into account epidemiological factors such as proximity to infected neighbouring areas, presence of *wildlife* and *vectors*, movements of *commodities*, fomites or production methods.

The disease prevention measures to be applied in the *zone* should be clearly defined and effectively communicated by the *Veterinary Authority*.

A country may establish multiple *free zones* for the same disease. The general considerations in Articles 4.Y.2. and 4.Y.3., as well as the measures included in disease-specific chapters should be applied in each individual *zone*.

Temporary *zones*, such as equine disease free *zones*, may be established in a country or *zone* by the *Veterinary Authority* for the hosting of international events with the goal to prevent possible disease transmission between temporarily imported and resident *subpopulations* where the control and *eradication* of some or all relevant diseases is not feasible or achievable in the entire territory of the country or *zone*.

Article 4.Y.5.

Protection zone

A *protection zone* may be established within a free country or *free zone* to protect it from an identified increased risk of disease entry. To achieve this objective, the general considerations in Articles 4.Y.2. and 4.Y.3., *biosecurity* measures should include intensified movement controls, animal identification and animal traceability to ensure that animals in the *protection zone* are clearly distinguishable from other *populations*. One or more *protection zones* may be established.

United States	Comment category: Deletion Proposed amended text: To achieve this objective, the general considerations in Articles 4.Y.2. and 4.Y.3., <i>biosecurity</i> measures should include intensified movement controls Rationale: Recommend deleting clause “the general considerations in Article 4.Y.2 and 4.Y.3” from the second sentence of Paragraph 1 under Protection zone as it is not clear what it modifies or how it better clarifies the recommendation for increased biosecurity measures. Supporting evidence: n/a
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Intensified *surveillance* in accordance with Chapter 1.4 and the relevant disease-specific chapter should be implemented in the *protection zone* and the rest of the *zone* or country, including any relevant *vectors* or *wildlife*.

If the *animal health status* of an established *protection zone* changes to infected owing to the occurrence of a *case* in that *protection zone*, the *animal health status* of the rest of the country or *zone* is not affected, provided the measures in place prevent the spread of disease, *infection* or *infestation*.

The *animal health status* of the *protection zone* will not be affected due to *vaccination*, unless otherwise specified in the relevant disease-specific chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Article 4.Y.6.

Infected zone

United States	Comment category: General Proposed amendment: Changing the name “Infected” to “Affected” for this type of zone, including update to the glossary term could be more inclusive to the concept of infection and infestation occurring in the area and create less confusion for countries as they apply zoning measures where the subpopulations of animals are more appropriately described as infected/infested.
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	Supporting evidence: n/a
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An *infected zone* may be established to reflect the *animal health status* of one or more *subpopulations* within the *zone*.

An *infected zone* in which an *infection* or *infestation* has been confirmed may be:

1. a *zone* of a country where the disease, *infection* or *infestation* has been present, while other *zones* of the country may be free; or
2. a *zone* of a previously free country or *zone*, in which the *infection* or *infestation* was introduced, while the rest of the country or *zone* remains free.

In both cases, measures should be applied in the *infected zone(s)* to prevent the spread of the disease, *infection* or *infestation* between *zones*. The *infection* or *infestation* within the *infected zone(s)* may be managed in different ways, including measures:

- aiming at short term *eradication*,
- progressively reducing the size or number of *infected zone(s)* and if possible achieving *eradication*,
- maintaining the boundaries of the *infected zone(s)* and if necessary adapting them to the evolving epidemiological situation.

To gain or recover free status of an *infected zone*, Member Countries should follow the recommendations in the relevant chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Article 4.Y.7.

Containment zone

In the event of *outbreaks* in a country or *zone* previously free from a disease, one or more *containment zones*, which include all *outbreaks*, may be established to eradicate the disease and minimise the impact on the rest of the country or *zone*.

Establishment of *containment zone(s)* requires:

- appropriate control and traceability of movement of *commodities* upon declaration of suspicion of the specified disease;
- epidemiological investigation (trace-back, trace-forward) after confirmation of *infection* or *infestation*, demonstrating that the *outbreaks* are all contained within the defined boundaries of the *containment zone(s)*;
- an effective emergency control strategy aimed at eradicating the disease;
- increased awareness and targeted *surveillance* in accordance with Chapter 1.4. in the rest of the country or *zone*, demonstrating no occurrence of *infection* or *infestation*;

Management of *containment zone(s)* may include reinforced movement control including standstill, *stamping-out policy*, *vaccination*, reinforced *surveillance* in the *zone*, establishment of an inner *zone* with *outbreaks* and an outer *zone* without *outbreaks*.
